

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
----- 108339

P R 121615Z NOV 75

FM AMEMBASSY RABAT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6965

INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY MADRID

S E C R E T RABAT 5496

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EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, MARR, SP, US, MO

SUBJECT: IMPACT OF SAHARA CRISIS ON US-SPANISH MILITARY RELATIONS

REF: MADRID 7904

1. FROM PERSPECTIVE OF RABAT, WE DO NOT BELIEVE A FURTHER BRIEFING OF SPANIARDS AT THIS TIME CONCERNING US-MOROCCAN MILITARY SUPPLY RELATIONSHIP WOULD BE HELPFUL, PARTICULARLY IN CONTEXT OF DELICATE SAHARA NEGOTIATIONS CURRENTLY UNDERWAY IN MADRID. THERE ARE ALSO POTENTIAL RISKS IN SUCH A BRIEFING FOR OUR BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP WITH MOROCCO.

2. WE CONTINUE TO ASSUME THAT KING HASSAN WOULD NOT HAVE CALLED OFF GREEN MARCH IF HE HAD NOT RECEIVED SOME VERY POSITIVE PRIOR ASSURANCES FROM GOS THAT A SAHARA SOLUTION SATISFACTORY TO MOROCCO WAS ON THE TRACKS. WITH TOP MOROCCAN TEAM NOW ENTERING SECOND DAY OF ITS NEGOTIATIONS IN MADRID, WE WOULD EXPECT VERY SHORTLY TO HAVE FAIRLY CONCRETE INDICATIONS WHETHER THE CONFLICT BETWEEN SPAIN AND MOROCCO OVER THE SAHARA IS INDEED ENDING. A BRIEFING JUST NOW ON OUR ARMS SUPPLIES TO MOROCCO SEEMS UNLIKELY TO MAKE ANY POSITIVE CONTRIBUTION TO ONGOING NEGOTIATIONS. WHAT IS WORSE, IT COULD CONCEIVABLY EVEN PLAY INTO HANDS OF HARDLINERS.

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3. IF A SPANISH-MOROCCAN SETTLEMENT ON SAHARA IS IN FACT IMMINENT, OUR ARMS SUPPLY ARRANGEMENTS WITH MOROCCO SHOULD NOT PROVE TO BE ANY MORE THAN A PASSING BURDEN ON US-SPANISH RELATIONS. IF MOROCCO AND SPAIN ARE INDEED ABLE TO ENTER A NEW PERIOD OF CONFLUENT INTERESTS, SPAIN MAY WELL COME TO VIEW MORE FAVORABLY US-MOROCCAN MILITARY COOPERATION AS A SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTION TO FIRMNESS OF MOROCCO'S WESTERN ORIENTATION. WITH DEVELOPMENT OF MORE NORMAL MOROCCAN-SPANISH RELATIONS, SPANIARDS IN ANY CASE WILL PRESUMABLY BE MORE INCLINED TO RECOGNIZE THAT OUR MILITARY SUPPLIES WILL HAVE ONLY A GRADUAL EFFECT ON MOROCCAN MILITARY POSTURE OVER PERIOD OF YEARS AND THAT EVEN THEN MOROCCO IS HARDLY LIKELY TO POSE ANY SERIOUS OFFENSIVE MILITARY CHALLENGE TO SPAIN.

4. ANOTHER FACTOR BEARING ON QUESTION OF FURTHER BRIEFING FOR SPANIARDS RELATES TO GOS' HAVING PASSED ON TO ALGERIANS THE DETAILED DATA WE PROVIDED SPAIN IN CONFIDENCE PREVIOUSLY (ALGIERS 3294). ALGERIA IS, OF COURSE, PRIME ENEMY IN MOROCCAN EYES, AND IF GOM GOT WIND OF THE LEAK, THIS LIKELY TO BE VIEWED BY MOROCCANS AS SERIOUS ACT OF BAD FAITH ON OUR PART.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: TERRITORIAL CLAIMS, NEGOTIATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 12 NOV 1975
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: ElyME
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975RABAT05496
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750393-1151
From: RABAT
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19751150/aaaabsky.tel
Line Count: 82
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION SS
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: STADIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: STADIS
Reference: 75 MADRID 7904
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: ElyME
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 18 JUN 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <18 JUN 2003 by MartinML>; APPROVED <31 OCT 2003 by ElyME>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: IMPACT OF SAHARA CRISIS ON US-SPANISH MILITARY RELATIONS
TAGS: PFOR, MARR, SP, US, MO
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006